## Interpellation.

*Mr. John Nidiry.*

19. In view of "the rapidly increasing political consciousness among the people of this State which is so full of promise, intellect and progressive ideas",

(*a*) do not the Government think that the time has come for conceding larger shares of administrative responsibilities to the people of Travancore?

(*b*) are not the Government aware of the repeated demand that is being made by the people through the platform and the press for some substantial reforms in their representative bodies like the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly and the Legislative Council on the lines adopted in British India and in some of the progressive Native States?

(*c*) are the Government aware that there is a widespread feeling that the existing Sri Mulam Popular Assembly should be constituted on a statutory basis with larger powers and wider representation by the reduction of the tax qualification from Rs. 50 to Rs. 10?

(*d*) have the Government bestowed sufficient attention on the advisability and necessity of establishing an Executive Council, with a people's representative in it, if possible, so as to command public support and confidence in all administrative measures?

(*e*) do the Government propose to take any steps to satisfy any of these just and timely demands of the people?

20. (*a*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether they have considered the advisability of extending the Railway from Kottarakara to Alwaye, especially in view of the large and growing revenue which the Railway has begun to yield after the opening of the Quilon-Trivandrum extension through inhabited areas for traffic from 1st January 1918?

(*b*) Are the Government aware that there is a serious complaint among the people in North Travancore that they are not benefited by the Railway Line already opened in the State through impenetrable mountains and forests?

(*c*) Do not the Government feel that the time has far advanced for undertaking the construction of the proposed Kottarakara-Alwaye Railway Line in view of

(1) popular demand;

(2) the proposed opening of the Cochin Harbour in the near future;

(3) the assured profit that may accrue to the State and the incomparable benefits to the people;

## Answer.

*Chief Secretary Mr. N. Rajarata Rao.*

19 (*a*) to (*e*). The Government are aware of the existence of the various opinions referred to by the Member. The question relates to three institutions:—The Sri Mulam Popular Assembly, the Legislative Council and an Executive Council.

*Sri Mulam Popular Assembly*:—Government propose, after the next session of the Assembly is over, to take in hand the revision of the rules regarding it.

*Legislative Council*:—This was reconstituted only a year ago on the recommendation of the late Dewan, Dewan Bahadur M. Krishnan Nair. It has to be assumed that the provisions of the Regulation reflect the considered opinion of the Government formed only a year ago as to the extent and kind of powers with which the Legislative Council could be invested. The Government consider that the Regulation should be given a fair trial before it is taken up for revision.

*Executive Council*:—The proposal to constitute an Executive Council does not, at present, commend itself to Government.

20. (*a*) to (*c*). Government cannot accept the correctness of many of the statements contained in the question. But the matter of Railway extension is engaging their attention.

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## Interpellation.

(4) the progressive and prosperous condition of the State finance;

(5) the feasibility of raising a public loan for the purpose if necessary; and

(6) the certainty of a balance of profit to the State even if the work is entrusted to any Railway Company on a guaranteed interest of 5 per cent.

## Answer.

*Secretary Mr. S. Parameswara Aiyar.*

21. (*a*) Are the Government aware that the industry of making jaggery from the cocoanut tree, the palmyra tree and the sago palm (choondapana) is fast dying out in our State? (*vide* the statistics given in the Administration Reports for 1093 and 1094:—

In 1092 quantity exported was 1,51,598 Cwts. to the value of Rs. 5,30,591.
„ 1093. „ exported was 1,05,327 Cwts. to the value of Rs. 3,68,645.
„ 1094 „ exported was 80,942 Cwts. to the value Rs. 2,83,300.

21. (*a*) & (*b*) Government are not aware that the jaggery industry is dying out as stated by the Member. The fall in exports may be due to increased local consumption of the article and its use in the distilleries for production of arrack.

(*b*) Do the Government know that jaggery was largely used by the people of the country in the place of sugar and that it is very difficult to obtain the article for local consumption even at the very high price which it commands in the local market?

(*c*) Are the Government aware that this is due to the very limited number of licenses issued by the Excise Department under what is known as the Sweet Toddy Rules with a view to raise the consumption of toddy for the purpose of increased revenue?

(*c*) No. The Sweet Toddy Rules are not applicable to the taluks of the Southern Division and to the taluks of Neyyattinkara and Shencottah where alone palmyra jaggery is made. In the few places where jaggery is manufactured from sweet toddy drawn from the cocoanut and the sago palm, licenses are freely issued for the tapping of sweet toddy to all *bona fide* manufacturers of jaggery. The Sweet Toddy Rules were not framed with a view to raise the consumption of toddy, but are intended to prevent the illicit manufacture of fermented toddy.

(*d*) Do the Government concur in the view of the Excise Department that if greater liberty was given for tapping sweet toddy it would open a door to the illicit manufacture of arrack?

(*d*) The answer is in the affirmative.

(*e*) Even if the view be correct, is not the virtual prohibition of tapping such trees for the manufacture of jaggery, an invasion of the rights of the owners of such trees, an invasion which has neither a legal nor an equitable justification?

(*e*) No.

(*f*) Should not the excise authorities find out some proper method to prevent illicit tapping or manufacture of arrack rather than destroy a very useful and profitable industry of the country?

(*f*) Government do not accept the view that the rules have tended to destroy the jaggery industry.

(*g*) Will the Government be pleased to state whether they propose to look into the deplorable condition of this industry with a view to revive and develop the same on a large scale.

(*g*) Government will look into the question of the development of the industry and will be glad to consider any useful suggestions that may be made.

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